1: Petrullo E-3 (1933-34) 1939 SS19 Yaruro SS19

There is little to be found in the literature on the Yaruros. Among the missionaries they had the reputation of being too wild to tame. They were accused of being parricides and were called eaters of clay. The Tamanachi and the Otomacos seemed to have had a more complex economic culture and received much more attention from the missionaries; but the Yaruros, due to their own shyness, were considered to be scarcely human, and little was done with them. They seemed to be especially sensitive to any scolding or maltreatment. Gumilla, writing in 1791, says "Their fear, completely beyond reason, is the root of their inconstancy and is the dismay of all the writers: more delicate than glass; if they feel that the missionary has looked at them fixedly, if they hear a word less gentle, it is sure that they will run away and, moreover, will take with them the entire family." This statement may be an indication of the early treatment received by the Yaruros at the hands of the soldiers and missionaries. It is a fear which has persisted down through the centuries and is no less intense today.

Linguistically the Yaruros do not seem to be connected with any other South American group. On the basis of a few limited vocabularies several attempts have been made to link the Yaruros to the Saliva or the Betoya. An examination of the text produced in this study will show no obvious affinity to other language families. However, this is a matter for future study.[1]

ARCHEOLOGY

The llanos of Apure have become legendary for many things, even archeologically. In the entire region no excavations have been conducted, but stories are current of the variety of archeological remains. The Calzada is probably the most famous of them all. According to verbal descriptions obtained from geologists and other visitors to the llanos, the Calzada has the appearance of an elevated roadbed running eastward for many miles from some point at the foot of the Andes. In it and in small mounds close by it has been reported that pottary and skeletal material have been found. There is no doubt that archeological remains are primitive. As we traveled about the country we found that most of the squatters had archeological pieces of varying degrees of interest. At La Trinchera there were even two amateur archeologists. One thing is certain, the archeological material which was uncovered, and which is being reported in another paper, has no relation to any of the Yaruro material. It is therefore certain that the Yaruros have not always occupied the region.

[1] See Bibliography.

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101 The Yaruro Indians, who among themselve call themselves by the term "pumę," live in the Venezuelan llanos, the tropical savannas that border the left bank of the Orinoco. They are fishermen, hunters, gatherers, and agriculturalists whose original culture has already greatly changed. All of their past
●197 is not yet known. As to their dialect, it has not as yet been classified in any of the known South American linguistic fami-
114 lies. The observations that make up this article come from investigations made on the spot by the author between 1947 and 1950.

I. The Territory
(see Map 1)[1]

131 a) Boundaries.

At the present time the territory populated by the Yaruro Indians lies approximately between 6.30 and 7.30 degrees north latitude and 67 and 69.30 degrees west longitude.

The bulk of the population, which was the subject of our investigations, lives along the banks of the Capanaparo and one of its tributaries, the Riecito, that is, on some 400 kilometers of river.

The rest are dispersed north of the Capanaparo, on the Arauca, the Cunaviche, and the neighboring rivers, and, to the south, on the banks of the Orinoco between the mouths of the Capanaparo and the Cinaruco and near the rivers located between the Capanaparo, the Riecito, and the Cinaruco.

b) Neighbors.

101 The whole region located north of the Capanaparo, the banks of the Orinoco, and part of the banks of the Capanaparo itself -- going upstream, the northern part up to the junction with the Riecito and the southern part on 220 kilometers up to the Madre Vieja Basiliero -- are populated by Venezuelan peasants, the llaneros, who thus occupy part of the Yaruro territory.

[1] [See p. 3. —Analyst]

7: Leeds E-4, 5 (1958) 1964 SS19 Yaruro SS19

thatched houses, pottery, etc., all of which are, according to Steward, Tropical Forest traits, consistent with that possession of horticulture which Le Besnerais and I both found for the Yaruro. Kirchhoff (1948 *a*: 456) and Steward (1946-1950: Vol. 5, p. 680) try to reinforce this argument by stating that Gilij's Eighteenth Century mention of the Yaruro's practice of eating green corn is proof of their recently having acquired corn-planting.

One can, just as well, argue to the contrary that, had they borrowed corn-use from the Spanish or any tribe long-accustomed to the utilization of corn, they would never have thought of using it green at all but rather yellow in the manner of their cultural creditors. Judging by both historical and present-day reports[4] of raiding, a pattern which appears to have been substantially elaborated in the area, we may argue that the use of green corn was one way of saving the crop from neighboring human predators and possibly from animal ones as well. In other words, eating green corn can well be considered an adaptive use of corn, possibly in an old pattern, given the ecological relationships of the area.

The Layrisse, *et al.*, article (1961) dismisses the horticulture that Le Besnerais and I find as being of recent origin but gives no basis for this judgement except that it makes more consistent their correlation of a population having a low or absent Diego antigen frequency with an older culture-layer and with various asserted linguistic connections. Such a procedure is scientifically not valid as proof, however useful it may be to set up hypotheses.

II

Clearly the only *final* resolutions to the ethnographic discrepancies are historical ones, however much logic may convince us that the introduction of horticulture to all Yaruro groups and its integration even into their mythology and social life in the fifteen years between Petrullo's and Le Besnerais' visits is unlikely. As for the social organization problem, all possible documentary evidence must be brought to bear.

Three major sources of historical reconstruction are potentially available — archeology, lingustics, and written history — as well as several minor lines of evidence.

First, linguistic reconstruction of genetic relationships would provide us with better hypotheses. If Greenberg's tentative classification (1956; cf., also, Steward and Faron, 1959: 22-23) is correct, the Yaruro are related to the Jívaro, the Cofan, the extinct Esmeralda speakers, and others, all of whom were, or are, actively horticultural peoples though the last named were also

[4] Cf. both Kirchhoff, 1948 *b*, and the sources he cites; Reichel-Dolmatoff, 1961; also my own observations.

7: Leeds E-4, 5 (1958) 1964 SS19 Yaruro SS19

significantly hunters and fishers. The distribution of these peoples suggests a geographical radiation from a common location that is implied as well by the relationships among the languages — probably from the west or southwest of present Yaruro country. Work on the centuries of separation, on the degrees of relationship of these languages among themselves and to other groups of the putative Andean-Equatorial family is urgently needed as is archeology in the supposed area of radiation.

Second, archeology would provide most interesting evidence. Petrullo (1939 *b*) collected a series of artifacts, mainly potsherds, which suggest a degree of culture well beyond minimal Tropical Forest level. Le Besnerais (Ms.) mentions not only the variety of potsherds to be found but also polished stone axes and funerary urns (cf., also, Vernau, 1901). I myself saw an immense number of crude, friable, slipped potsherds; many potsherds generally of the Arauquín type; a polished stone celt; a polished stone mano, beautifully made (cf. photo), and so on. None of these objects, except the crude potsherds, have been found in situ, but the Indians assert that they dig them up all the time.

The archeological items would suggest that cultures previously in the area, whether Yaruro or not, were horticultural. Though no archeology of any kind has been done in the South Venezuelan llanos, these meager indications suggest that the Kirchhoff-Steward hypothesis is erroneous since the Yaruro of our times could not be a remnant of aboriginal hunters and gatherers if the area was previously at a much higher cultural level. The general hypotheses of Cruxent and Rouse (1958-1959: 263 *ff.*) — especially that relating to a fusion between a western corn area and an eastern manioc area — would further tend to cast doubts on the whole Handbook scheme since the obvious routes for this fusion to have taken place are the great east-west llanos rivers. Archeological work is desperately needed here, and seems to me of central theoretical importance. It is hard to understand why so many workers have skirted the area.[3]

Before turning to written history I wish to take up some minor lines of evidence which are suggestive for the resolution of the ethnographic discrepancies. One has to do with the content of the ideology. Quite a number of items such as the earth mother, the ancestor cult, the serpent rainbow, the anaconda god, and so on (cf., Antolínez, 1939; Steward and Métraux, 1948, esp. p. 628; etc.), appear to connect the Yaruro with tribes to the west and southwest including the Chibcha and the Jívaro.

[3] No one has done systematic work in the llanos. Only sporadic finds have been made there (e. g., Petrullo, 1939 *b*; Vernau, 1901). The intensive archeological fieldwork has all been in the great circle around the llanos (cf. a great many works by Cruxent cited in Cruxent and Rouse, 1958-1959; Evans and Meggers, n.d.; Howard, 1943; Kidder, 1944; Marcano, 1893; Meggers and Evans, 1955; Osgood, 1943; Osgood and Howard, 1943; Rouse, 1956; Rouse and Cruxent, 1957, and many other Rouse articles listed in Cruxent and Rouse, 1958-1959. Cf., also, unpublished work by P. Gallagher, by M. Sanoja, and by E. Wagner.